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C O N F I D E N T I A L SARAJEVO 001700

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STATE FOR EUR (DICARLO), EUR/SCE (HOH, SAINZ, FOOKS), P
(BAME), D (SMITH), NSC FOR BRAUN, OSD FOR FLORY, USNIC FOR
WEBER, GREGORIAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/28/2016

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SUBJECT: LEADING SDA FIGURE PLEDGES ASSISTANCE FOR SOFA
RATIFICATION; SCORES POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGH

Classified By: ADCM D Sarro for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) PolMilOff met the morning of July 28 with Halid Genjac, parliamentarian and member of the Party for Democratic Action (SDA) presidency, to discuss continuing delays in the ratification of the U.S.-BiH Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). The BiH House of Representatives ratified the agreement, but the upper house of the BiH Parliament, the House of Peoples, has yet to take action. Under the BiH Law on Treaties, the BiH Tri-Presidency has the authority to implement a treaty before formal parliamentary ratification. The Presidency took this step in May 2006. The Chairman of the House of Peoples' Foreign Affairs Committee, SDA member Hasan Cengic, has delayed his committee's action on the SOFA.

¶2. (C) Genjac confirmed that Cengic is the only roadblock to ratification. Cengic, who is known to have anti-Western sentiments, refuses to allow his committee to take action. Genjac promised to speak with Cengic in the coming days, and inform him that his delaying tactics were unacceptable and violated parliamentary procedure. If Cengic still refused to take action on the SOFA, Genjac said he would use his authority to get the General Secretary of the House of Peoples to send Cengic a formal letter concerning his lack of compliance with parliamentary procedure and have the bill removed from Cengic's committee. Under either scenario, Genjac predicted, the House of Peoples would be able to ratify the SOFA when it returns to session in September.

¶3. (C) Genjac phoned several hours following the meeting with the information that he had spoken with Cengic, who agreed to cease holding up the SOFA. According to Genjac, Cengic pledged to move the agreement out of committee when the House of Peoples reconvenes September 3. Such a move would permit the full House to ratify the SOFA on September 5.

¶4. (C) Comment: Due to the lengthy delays in ratifying the SOFA, we cannot be certain that this is a major breakthrough. We will continue to encourage Genjac to take the matter to the General Secretary if Cengic balks at fulfilling his pledge, as he has been known to do in the past. End comment.

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